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FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8806  
INFO RUEHVT/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0951  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 0487  
RUEHVT/AMEMBASSY VALLETTA PRIORITY 0840  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 6340  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMUSNAVEUR NAPLES IT PRIORITY  
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY  
RHMFIISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY

UNCLAS ROME 001787

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO INL/LP CDR PHIL WELZANT.

E.O. 12958: N/A  
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SU, ET, GH, ER, IT  
SUBJECT: ITALY ACCEPTS 46 AFRICAN MIGRANTS RESCUED AT SEA  
BY U.S. NAVY

REF: A. SECSTATE 116313

¶1. (SBU) On August 20 Embassy Rome made an urgent request per Secstate 116313 for assistance with the 46 African migrants, rescued at sea by the U.S. Navy August 19 in international waters 60 nautical miles off the coast of Libya. The GOI decided late August 20 to take custody of the migrants, who were transferred to two Italian Coast Guard vessels the morning of August 21. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) POLOFF delivered reftel points, stressing the urgent humanitarian aspect, to MFA Chief of Staff to the Director General for Italians Abroad and Migrants, Marjline Armellin August 20. Armellin said she would take the matter to MFA Vice Director General for Italians Abroad and Migrants, Gioacchino Carlo Trizzino, and to the Ministry of the Interior immediately and respond as soon as possible, and certainly by COB.

¶3. (SBU) At 1800 local time, VDG Trizzino called Acting Political Minister Counselor to say Italy was favorably disposed to taking the migrants and requested contact information for NAVEUR to coordinate logistics of the transfer. At 2000 NAVEUR Battle Watch contacted poloff to ask for a point of contact in the Italian Ministry of the Interior since the GOI had not yet contacted NAVEUR. Poloff provided NAVEUR with the contact information for MOI Prefetto Beccaria. At 1000 on August 21, the 46 migrants were transferred from the USS DONALD COOK to two Italian Coast Guard vessels.

¶4. (SBU) The GOI has requested the USG maintain a passive public affairs profile, but has not asked for any other assistance or assurances from the USG.

¶5. (SBU) Comment. This exceptionally quick positive response from the GOI on a sensitive issue was particularly noteworthy for happening in the middle of the Italian holiday season.

¶6. (U) MINIMIZE CONSIDERED  
End Comment.

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